



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
Telefax
(617) 796-1142
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

James Freas
Acting Director

PUBLIC HEARING/WORKING SESSION MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 12, 2015
MEETING DATE: June 16, 2015
TO: Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen
FROM: James Freas, Acting Director of Planning and Development
Alexandra Ananth, Chief Planner for Current Planning
Daniel Sexton, Senior Planner
CC: Petitioner

In response to questions raised at the Land Use Committee public hearings, and/or staff technical reviews, the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming public hearing/working session. This information is supplemental to staff analysis previously provided at the public hearing.

PETITION #93-15

339 River Street

Request for Special Permit/Site Plan Approval to waive five parking stalls, to allow parking in the front and side setbacks, to waive the maneuvering aisle width, to allow a driveway entrance in excess of 25 feet, to allow tandem parking, and to waive parking lot screening and lighting requirements in order to locate a food establishment.

The Land Use Committee (Committee) held a public hearing on May 8, 2015, which was held open so that the petitioner could respond to questions/concerns that were raised in the Planning Department's memorandums and at the public hearing by the Committee and public. The petitioner submitted information on June 10, 2015 in response to the questions/concerns that were raised. Overall, the Planning Department finds that the petitioner's responses are complete, and provides the following supplemental comments:

Community Meeting Results. A community meeting, facilitated by the petitioner, was held on Tuesday, June 9, 2015 for the surrounding neighborhood to discuss the proposed project. According to information provided by the petitioner, the attendees were excited about the proposed restaurant. No specific concerns were raised at the meeting.

Parking Utilization Study. The petitioner completed a survey of parking for the surrounding area during the anticipated hours of operation. According to the survey, the on-street parking stalls in the area are heavily used for short periods during the morning peak commute hours. During the mid-day,

afternoon, and evening hours, availability appears to increase. As such, the petitioner has concluded that there is on average a surplus of available on-street parking in the immediate area to accommodate the requested parking stall waiver.

Based on multiple visits to the site, staff confirms that the level of availability of on-street parking in the area during the above periods is correct. The Planning Department supports the requested waiver of five parking stalls. The Planning Department recommends that the petitioner, as part of their parking demand management plan, encourage employees and patrons to utilize mass transit, walk, or bike to the establishment.

Landscaping and Screening. To minimize the visual impact of the proposed use and enhance the aesthetic appearance of the site, the petitioner is proposing to install raised landscape beds, potted plants, and planter boxes. These landscape areas are proposed to be planted with azalea shrubs and annual plantings. The petitioner is proposing to rebuild the existing retaining wall along the northern property line and construct a retaining wall with a six-foot tall vinyl fence on top along the southerly property line, which abuts a single-family residence. According to the petitioner, none of the proposed retaining walls will exceed the by right maximum allowable height. Further, the petitioner has agreed to screen the dumpster/storage area located at the northeast corner of the site.

The Planning Department believes the measures proposed above will enhance the site and streetscape as well as minimize the potential for off-site impacts in the surrounding area.

Recommendation.

Based on the supplemental information submitted, the Planning Department finds the petition to be complete. The Planning Department is supportive of the project and recommends approval with conditions.